

as a people and bind us together as a nation. It is important for future generations to understand these values and principles, which we hold as standards in our endeavor to preserve and realize the promise of our constitutional democracy. I wish these young "constitutional experts" the best of luck in all of their future endeavors.

IMPROVING EDUCATION RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1350) to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and for other purposes:

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to speak regarding H.R. 1350, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

It is with great regret that I feel compelled to vote against the IDEA reauthorization bill. I had looked forward to voting on a bill that finally provides adequate resources for students with disabilities, their families, and teachers. I had looked forward to voting on a bill that would continue to protect the unique needs of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, the measure offered by the majority failed on both these counts and does a disservice to the teachers and the children that they serve.

I am profoundly disappointed that once again our Congress has failed to live up to the funding promises of the original Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, passed in 1975. The original bill recognized our federal responsibility to help states provide a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities. While the original law promised to fund 40% of states' costs to educate these special needs children, Congress has never funded more than 18%. Without appropriate funds, schools are caught in a failing balancing act, trying to provide adequate resources to students with disabilities while also meeting the needs of typical students. I know the rural schools in the First District of Texas simply cannot wait any longer for the relief they so badly need. We should have finally committed ourselves to fulfilling the promise of IDEA with mandatory funding for these students. Anything less is unacceptable.

I am also deeply concerned regarding the discipline provisions in H.R. 1350 for children with disabilities. No one believes that teachers and principals should not have the right to discipline students. However, this bill eliminates protections that children with disabilities deserve in consideration of their limitations. Current law requires schools to determine whether a student's actions were the result of a disability before determining a punishment. This new bill does not do so and puts more students at risk for suspension or expulsion. It is important that we retain protections for the best interests of these children, and remember the challenges they endure.

This IDEA bill also fails to protect families who feel their school system is not complying with their children's needs. Previously there

was no statute of limitations on parents' rights to file grievances against the schools. This new bill requires that they do so within one year of the incident. Often times parents aren't aware of the rights that their children are entitled to under IDEA and do not fully understand what services would best suit their child. While we should discuss the need for closure on potential liability for schools, certainly parents should have more than one year to appeal their schools' decisions.

My mother was a school teacher for 30 years and has well impressed upon me the challenges of teaching children with disabilities without the resources to back it up. I have talked with parents of special needs children at length about the struggles they face in getting their children the services they so badly need. Our parents and teachers desperately need our help and this bill fails to meet the mark. For these reasons, I cannot support the IDEA re-authorization bill, but will continue to fight in Congress to give our communities the educational resources they deserve.

TRIBUTE TO AIR FORCE LT. GENERAL ROGER DEKOK

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 2003

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life and career of my friend, Air Force Lt. General Roger DeKok.

General DeKok died suddenly last week while on a business trip. My heartfelt condolences, and those of the many individuals in the South Bay he commanded and who were his friends, go to his wife, Carol, and family.

I first met General DeKok when he assumed command in August 1996 of the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) at Los Angeles Air Force Base in my district. SMC is the Air Force's pre-eminent procurement center for space-based systems, including the nation's sophisticated surveillance satellites and technology to track and intercept enemy missiles.

Commander of SMC for only two years, General DeKok excelled in motivating people. His loyalty, warmth and kind personality are virtues for which he will be remembered. Under his leadership, SMC continued its tradition of excellence and continued to produce many of the high quality space-based systems necessary for the war fighter of the 21st century.

General DeKok's activities and passion centered on the frontiers of outer space. He served in numerous space plans and operations positions, from detachment level to space policy work in the White House, and commanded two space wings.

While serving at the Pentagon in 1983, he coordinated the Air Force Space Plan. During his assignment to the White House National Security Council, he helped develop and coordinate the U.S. National Space Policy that was signed by President Reagan in January 1988. Prior to assuming his last position as vice commander of Air Force Space Command at Peterson AFB, he served as deputy chief of staff for plans and programs at Headquarters U.S. Air Force, where he was responsible to the secretary of the Air Force and the chief of staff for planning, programming and

manpower activities within the corporate Air Force.

General DeKok retired from the Air Force in April 2002 after 34 years of service and joined TRW Inc., which was later acquired by Northrop Grumman Corp. At the time of his passing, he was vice president and deputy general manager of Northrop Grumman's Command, Control & Intelligence Division.

Roger DeKok deserves the thanks of a grateful nation. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends and the communities he served.

CONGRATULATING CHARTER SCHOOLS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES FOR THEIR ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, as well as co-chair of National Charter School Week, I strongly support the H. Res. 204, legislation honoring National Charter Schools Week.

Public schools are America's commitment to providing a high quality education for every child. I am dedicated to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to receive a quality education regardless of what public school they attend. This includes charter schools, which are models of successful education reform and one of the fastest growing education innovations working to improve our public education.

As a National Co-Chair of Charter Schools, I would like to take a minute to celebrate the first decade of Charter Schools in the United States. Traditionally, charter schools are independent public schools, designed and operated by educators, parents, community members and others. Since the first charter school began operation in 1992 in St. Paul, Minnesota, the number of charter schools has grown to nearly 2,700, serving 500,000 students around the country.

I am proud to say that we currently have 128 charter schools operating across the state of Wisconsin. In my congressional district alone, we have 20 charter schools presently and that number grows each year.

Just last week, I took the opportunity to visit the LaCrosseroads Charter School in my hometown of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and was impressed by all of the wonderful things that have been accomplished there in just the past several years. The interests, involvement and stewardship of these charter school students extend well beyond La Crosse and reach out beyond the borders of this country with their active participation in the Red Cross School Chest Program. For this program, LaCrosseroads students have been collecting school supplies for Red Cross distribution to children in other countries, who are unable to attend school because of war or natural disasters.

Charter schools have consistently been at the forefront of my priority list, and I am pleased that Wisconsin is one of seven states with over 100 exceptional charter schools. I have consistently advocated for increased